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ABSTRACT

This booklet outlines procedures for evaluating a school district's writing program that was designed to overcome the adverse educational and social effects of minority group isolation by improving the academic achievement of minority group students. The first section describes how the writing program addressed three of the school district's priorities for students in kindergarten through grade five: (1) student achievement in language arts, (2) student achievement in social studies, and (3) minority student achievement in all basic skills areas. The second section lists the methods proposed to evaluate the program, including commercially available tests, classroom observations, and teacher questionnaires. The third section discusses the two issues to be addressed by the evaluation: the dissemination of the instructional activities of the written composition program throughout the school district and the retention of certain aspects of teacher training in the program model. The remainder of the booklet provides a breakdown of the evaluation into specific skill areas and information on the dissemination schedule, information sources, data collection, and time allocation. (AEA)

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EVALUATION DESIGN

Written Composition Program

Spring, 1980

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PROGRAM STAFF

The following Austin Independent School District staff members are responsible for the implementation of the Written Composition Program in AISD.

Jetta Todaro
Written Composition Program Coordinator

Kathryn Stone
Compensatory Planner, State Compensatory Education

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I

EVALUATION DESIGN REVIEW FORM

The following persons have been given an opportunity to review and provide input on pertinent sections of this design.

Jetta Todaro
Written Composition Program Coordinator

Kathryn Stone
Compensatory Planner, State Compensatory Education

George Bowden
Director, Elementary Education

II A

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The 1979-1980 Written Composition Program is an instructional project which is designed to "overcome the adverse educational and social effects of minority group isolation by improving the academic achievement of minority students." In addition, the program is designed to address three of the District's priority areas: 1) student achievement in the basic skills area of language arts, 2) student achievement in the basic skills area of social studies, and 3) minority student achievement in all basic skills areas.

The program, now in its third year, was approved by the AISD Board of Trustees in August, 1979. For the first two years the program was funded by the Federal government under the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) and was known as the ESAA Pilot Program. This is the first year in which the program is completely funded by the District.

The primary program goals are to improve writing skills (mechanics of writing as well as expression), and also, to determine whether such improvement will influence reading achievement. The educational treatment provides a variety of opportunities for students to learn and apply various writing skills. The evaluation of this program focuses on the relative effectiveness of this method of reading/writing instruction with minority students.

The instructional model consists of training teachers in methods designed to improve the teaching of grammar and written composition, direct instruction of students in the language arts and social studies/science classes, and the AISD essential competencies in written composition and grammar. This offers a structured method of instruction in building sentences and patterning language. The Language Experience Approach is also used to teach grammar and writing. This approach, which is based on the existing language of the student, combines reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in the instructional process.

The program staff consists of a coordinator and a compensatory planner. The coordinator's responsibilities include the overall administration of the program, staff development, curriculum development, and materials selection and acquisition. The compensatory planner, funded through state compensatory monies, assists in various aspects of the program on a part-time basis.

Six elementary campuses, each with a population of 50% or more minority students, were selected to participate in the program. Approximately 900 students (K-5) from the target schools will receive direct services from the classroom teachers participating in the program. The six target schools are Campbell, Norman, Oak Springs/Rosewood, Pecan Springs, Sims, and Winn. One classroom per grade level per school (a total of 36 classes) will be involved in the project. Twelve classes from Brown and Maplewood schools will also be involved as the comparison classes for the project.

IIB

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The Written Composition Program will be evaluated in two major areas. Information will be gathered on the extent to which the treatments have been implemented, with emphasis upon both problem areas and areas of success. Additional data will be gathered concerning the student effects from participating in the program.

Information regarding the program will be gathered from seven primary sources:

1) The Assessment of Writing Skills instrument will be used to measure gains for the year on a pretest-posttest basis, with a comparison between the program and comparison groups.

2) Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (Reading, Vocabulary, and Language Skills subtests) scores will be used to measure gains and make comparisons between the program and comparison groups..

3) California Achievement Tests (Reading and Vocabulary subtests) scores will be used to measure gains and make comparisons between the program and comparison groups. The CAT will serve as the pretest, the ITBS will serve as the posttest.

4) A time estimate will be used to determine the amount of time spent in written composition and language arts activities during a school week.

5) Classroom observations will be used to assess the degree of program implementation in the classroom.

6) A teacher questionnaire will be used to assess teachers' use of staff development activities and the materials and techniques specified in the program model to evaluate the degree of program implementation.

7) The Boehm Test of Basic Concepts will be used to assess gains for the year on a pretest-posttest basis, with a comparison of program and comparison groups at the kindergarten level.

Comparison groups will be selected for comparative analyses of information from each of these sources. Grades 1-5 of all schools involved will be used for the student data analyses, because writing is not required at the kindergarten level.

III A
DECISION QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

A. Accountability Question

D1. Should the instructional activities of the Written Composition Program be disseminated throughout the Austin Independent School District?

B. Program Question

D2. What aspects of teacher training in the program model (techniques and content) should be retained for future teacher training in this area?

III B
DECISION QUESTIONS OVERVIEW

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DECISION QUESTION	DECISION DATE	DATE NEEDED	RELEVANT EVALUATION QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES	INFORMATION SOURCES
D1. Should the instructional activities of the Written Composition Program be disseminated throughout the Austin Independent School District?	July, 1980	June 30, 1980	D1-1. Did the Written Composition Program meet its writing objectives for 1979-1980? (The writing skill competencies of at least 60% of a 50% sample of the students in the program group (grades 1-5) will have improved significantly.)	Assessment of Writing Skills Instrument
			D1-2. Did the Written Composition Program meet its reading achievement objectives for 1979-1980? (Fifty percent of a 50% sample of the students in the program group (grades 2-5) will demonstrate a significant increase in reading achievement.)	California Achievement Tests Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
			D1-3. Were there significant differences between the writing skill competencies of students in the program and comparison groups?	Assessment of Writing Skills Instrument
			D1-4. Did students in the program group improve their reading skills significantly more than did students in the comparison group?	California Achievement Tests Iowa Tests of Basic Skills

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III B
DECISION QUESTIONS OVERVIEW

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DECISION QUESTION	DECISION DATE	DATE NEEDED	RELEVANT EVALUATION QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES	INFORMATION SOURCES
			D1-5. Were there significant differences in writing skills competencies between the students of teachers who had been in the program for three years and the students of teachers who had been in the program for one year?	Assessment of Writing Skills Instrument
			D1-6. Were there significant differences in writing skills competencies between students who had been in the program for more than one year and students who had been in the program for one year?	Assessment of Writing Skills Instrument
			D1-7. Did kindergarten students in the program group demonstrate an increase on the Boehm significantly above that of students in the comparison group?	Boehm Test of Basic Concepts
D2. What aspects of teacher training in the program model should be retained for future teacher training in this area?	July, 1980	June 30, 1980	D2-1. D2-1 through D2-7. (Same as D1-1 through D1-7. See above questions.)	Same as D1-1 through D1-7
			D2-8. Were the program models implemented?	Teacher Questionnaire Classroom Observation Time Estimate

III B
DECISION QUESTIONS OVERVIEW

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DECISION QUESTION	DECISION DATE	DATE NEEDED	RELEVANT EVALUATION QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES	INFORMATION SOURCES
			D2-9. Did teachers in the program group spend more time using the specific techniques and materials of the program model than teachers in the comparison group?	Teacher Questionnaire Classroom Observation Time Estimate
			D2-10. Did teachers in the program group spend more time providing writing instruction during social studies, science or language arts than teachers in the comparison group?	Teacher Questionnaire Classroom Observation Time Estimate
			D2-11. Did program group classes spend more time writing during social studies, science or language arts than comparison group classes?	Teacher Questionnaire Classroom Observation Time Estimate
			D2-12. Did teachers in the program group feel that their training and supervision, and administrative support were adequate?	Teacher Questionnaire
			D2-13. What aspects of their preparation for the program did teachers in the program group feel were most and least beneficial to them?	Teacher Questionnaire

III B
DECISION QUESTIONS OVERVIEW

79.24

DECISION QUESTION	DECISION DATE	DATE NEEDED	RELEVANT EVALUATION QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES	INFORMATION SOURCES
			D2-14. What is the cost-benefit ratio of the program group in terms of materials, staff, and development costs relative to student achievement?	Assessment of Writing Skills Instrument Program Budget Information

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V

DISSEMINATION

INFORMATION	DISSEMINATION FORMAT	DATE	PERSONS RECEIVING
Final Report Summary	Report	6-80	Program Coordinator Director of Developmental Programs Director of Elementary Education
Final Technical Report	Report	6-80	Program Coordinator Director of Developmental Programs Director of Elementary Education

VI
INFORMATION SOURCES

INFORMATION SOURCE	POPULATION	EVAL. QUES. REFERENCED	DATE COLLECTED	ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES	REMARKS
1. Assessment of Writing Skills Instrument	Program students (grades 1-5) and comparison students in selected classes at Brown and Maplewood.	1-1 2-1 1-3 2-3 1-5 2-5 1-6 2-6 2-14	September, 1979 and May, 1980	Distribution statistics of gain scores to determine percentages of students showing pre- to posttest gains; Repeated measures ANOVA. Analysis of covariance. Distribution statistics by program by program cost.	
2. California Achievement Tests	Same as above, except grades 2-5, inclusive.	1-2 2-2 1-4 2-4	April, 1979	Analysis of covariance. Distribution statistics. Analysis of covariance.	
3. Iowa Tests of Basic Skills	Same as #2.	Same as #2	April, 1980	Same as #2.	
4. Boehm Test of Basic Concepts	Program students (K-level) and comparison students in selected classes at Brown and Maplewood.	1-7 2-7	September, 1979, and February, 1980	Analysis of covariance.	
5. Teacher Questionnaire	Program teachers and comparison teachers.	2-8 2-11 2-9 2-12 2-10 2-13	April, 1980	Distribution statistics.	

VI
INFORMATION SOURCES

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INFORMATION SOURCE	POPULATION	EVAL. QUES. REFERENCED	DATE COLLECTED	ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES	REMARKS
6. Classroom Observation of Teachers	Randomly selected teachers in program and comparison schools.	2-8 2-10 2-9 2-11	February through April, 1980	Distribution statistics and comparisons of time use.	
7. Time Estimate	All program and comparison teachers.	2-8 2-10 2-9 2-11	April, 1980	Distribution statistics and comparisons of time use.	
8. Budget Information	Written Composition Program.	2-14	June, 1980	Distribution statistics by program by program cost.	

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VII

DATA TO BE COLLECTED IN THE SCHOOLS

A. Students

September, 1979 and April-May, 1980	1. Assessment of Writing Skills: Administered pre and post to all program classes and selected comparison classes.
April, 1979	2. California Achievement Tests: Administered to all elementary students grades 1 to 5.
April, 1980	3. Iowa Tests of Basic Skills: Administered to all elementary students grades 1 to 5.
September, 1979 and February, 1980	4. Boehm Test of Basic Concepts: Administered pre- and post to all Title I kindergarten students. Special posttest on program K-class at Winn (program school).

B. Teachers

April, 1980	1. Teacher Questionnaire: Administered to all program and comparison teachers.
February-April, 1980	2. Classroom Observation: Ramdomly selected program and comparison classrooms.
April, 1980	3. Time Estimate: Kept during a two-week period by all program and comparison teachers.

C. Other Records

Throughout school year.	1. Budget Information: Obtained from Program Coordinator.

EVALUATION TIME RESOURCES ALLOCATION *

ACTIVITY	DIRECTOR	SENIOR EVALUATOR	EVALUATOR	PROGRAMMER	EVALUATION ASSISTANT	SECRETARY
A. Design	.7	.5	10 5			2
B. Information Sources	.5	1.0	5.0			
1. Assessment of Writing Skills			5.0			
2. I.T.B.S.			5.0			
3. Boelm			5.0			
4. Teacher Log			5.0			
5. Classroom Observation Teacher			30.0			
6. Teacher Questionnaire			5.0			
7. Budget			5.0			
C. Interim Dissemination			3.0			
D. Final Report	1.0	1.0	20.0			20
E. Other Dissemination	.1	1.0				
F. Admin. and Other Indirect Time Costs	2.0	6.0	12.0			
G. Total	3.7	10.0	105.5			22

* Time units are days